

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7094

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 2024

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FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SY LE US

SUBJ: MESSAGE FOR ASAD

REF: STATE 80365

1. ON ASAD'S INSTRUCTIONS, WHO ENGAGED IN LENGTHY MEETINGS TODAY WITH VISITING LEBANESE HEADED BY SAEB SALAM, I DELIVERED YOUR MESSAGE REFTEL TO HIS POLITICAL COUNSELOR DAOUDI. DAOUDI TOOK CAREFUL NOTES AND PROMISED GET MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT SOONEST.

2. DAOUDI COMMENTED THAT PERHAPS HE WAS BEING CYNICAL BUT HE FOUND IT "CURIOUS" THAT FRANGIE, CHAMOUN AND GEMAYEL APPARENTLY MADE NO REFERENCE TO SYRIAN MEDIATION WHEN THEY TALKED TO BROWN. IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND IN PRIVATE MESSAGES TO DAMASCUS THEY WERE PRAISING SYRIA AND ASAD TO THE SKY. THEY SHOULD BE, HE ADDED, SINCE SYRIA WAS MAKING A "VITAL CONTRIBUTION" TO THE WELL BEING OF LEBANON, ESPECIALLY TO THE CHRISTIANS. "THIS HAS BEEN AT SOME COST TO OUR OTHER TIES"

3. DREW HIS ATTENTION TO PORTION YOUR MESSAGE THAT THESE WERE BROWN'S "IMPRESSIONS AFTER HIS INITIAL CONVERSATIONS." I DOUBTED THERE WAS ANY ATTEMPT TO DOWNPLAY SYRIA'S ROLE BY THE CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP. NOR WAS THERE ANY EVIDENCE

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THEY WERE TRYING TO PLAY USG OFF AGAINST THE SYRIANS. THEY

KNEW THE LIMITS OF OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE DIPLOMATIC PROCESS. HOWEVER HIS POINT, THAT MENTION OF SYRIA BY THE LEADERSHIP TRIO WAS CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT WAS A FAIR ONE AND I WOULD REPORT HIS OBSERVATION TO WASHINGTON.

4. COMMENT: FROM BEIRUT'S 2867 IT IS CLEAR THAT SYRIA DID INDEED FIGURE IN THE INITIAL CONVERSATIONS, BUT IN THE CONTEXT OF TRYING TO GET US TO FACILITATE SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION. I DID NOT SHARE THIS WITH DAOUDI. I FLAG HIS REACTION BECAUSE HE WILL PROBABLY MENTION IT TO ASAD. IT ILLUSTRATES THE DEPTH OF SYRIAN SENSITIVITY ABOUT THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON.

5. SUGGEST PASS BEIRUT.
MURPHY

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NNN

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